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CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 13
No. 5 — Autumn, 1950

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CANADIAN
POETRY MAGAZINE

Autumn 1950

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"To write not to be understood is no less vaine than to speak not to be heard. Fooles and Madmen use to talk to themselves in Publique, and he that publishes that which he would have no Man understand but himself do's the same thing."

SAMUEL SUTLER

CANADIAN

Stop short at Calgary's wide sombrero,
The warm gay welcome of Montreal,
The musical sound of the unnamed places
Heard at night like a silver call.

Divide in your mind the towers of Toronto
With young Vancouver and old Quebec;
The mountain peaks and the windy places,
The rigid land and the heaving deck.

Glengarry, Stratford, Windsor, Lytton,
Fundy, Saguenay, swift Lachine,
Kootenay, Cariboo, Okanagan
Stab the mind with the things they mean.

Wake up in the night for an engine's whistle,
Name over the things that you loved the most;
Your women, your money, your first possession,
The grown-up grin and the small boy's boast.

Assay your goods for a true accounting,
Total your wealth and count your breath;
Wake up in the night and find you've only
A chattel mortgage on life and death.

But here is the music of Indian totems
Where never a man has placed his foot,
The taste of smoke and the smell of freedom,
The cloud-hung lakes and the campfire soot.

Here is the blue of the inland oceans,
The pride of wonder, the hope of gold,
Men who have taken the north for neighbour,
Who laughed with summer and cursed the cold.

I have loved me well this unknown country,
So much, so long that I could not stay;
I will speak small words in the cold white silence,
I will write her name on a hot blue bay.

I will take her clouds to make my pillow,
I will take her sins to be my own;
A friend's forgetting, a woman's betrayal
Shall pass me by for a god unknown.

Give me the living, the love and the laughter,
Then take them away as the death-wish will,
But I will remember Atlantic breakers,
I will make my bed on a western hill,
And sleep long sleep on a western hill.

Alfred W. Purdy

MARY THE ALLAN

I

How can I break through the centuries and bring this girl to you,
How break through?
She was reality as much as the silver myth of a movie star,
As much as obsequious waiters in any cocktail bar.
She was flesh and utter loveliness a thousand years ago,
A dark browed Allan girl but seldom seen
In the narrow alleyways of the city of Constantine,
When Persian Omar was dreaming his shadow show.

II

Do you see her there in a street by the Golden Horn,
Escorted by giant axmen in scarlet cloaks at night?
A girl with leopard-eyes, while the stars of Capricorn
Look down on ebony slaves with a darker light.
She walks like Ruth in the fields, her face unveiled;
The guardsmen staring ahead, and afraid to look
For fear their eyes might speak where lips had failed.
But the feet went by and the heavy houses shook.
Where does she go tonight—does the emperor wait?
And which emperor—the first one or the last
To drink at her mouth till the hunger of madness passed?
Or does he merely wish to whisper his hate
Of the tall Crusaders on the Roman Road this afternoon,
With sunlight flashing on armored backs?—How soon
Will it be until they forget the Holy Land
With a prize like old Byzantium under their hand?

III

And you, the scientific men in smoky hotel rooms at night,
Discussing excavation plans, the possible use of dynamite.
You, with your self assurance, the security of black cigars,
Your condescension among the Arab bazaars.
Be careful when you sift her secrets from the dusty past,
She has no haste to give them up at last.

Be gentle in your searchings among the dromedaries' bones,
Your language over the field telephones.
There may be someone listening, leopard-eyes and ivory ear,
What might she hear?

IV

The wind that blows the date palms to and fro.
The little tinkling sound of camel bells,
The whispering brown roots of things that grow,
And women drawing water at the wells,
And women drawing water at the wells. . . .

Alfred W. Purdy

UNLIT DAWN

The conversation lies about the room
cold in the coffee left in coffee cups,
dead in the ashtrays, ashes spilled on rugs,
rounded and finished on the silences
that sit in wet rings on the furniture.

Surely we were not here this hour
lighting our cigarettes from quickened words
that ranged like tapers, hung like chandeliers
(as we were solitary, or gregarious.)
Morning is with our words,
quite butted out.
No cock shall crow to free us from the night
who have evaporated, yet remain.
(If we could sleep, the clocks might start again . . .
If we could wake, we'd know they had not stopped . . .)

The room is stale, like railway waiting rooms,
the anxious bulbs protruding from their sockets.

Esther Gudjonson

SONG

Lord, I know that spring shall blow up daffodils,
Beat-gold, mock-gold mirrors of the sun,
And in the snow-cold valleys,
Secretive grass-spinning shall be begun,
And verdancy shall spread like whispers through the hills,
Across the softly-moulded, sweet breast-swelling
Of my beloved hills.

A sheath of cold hate,
The ice will break,
Across the face of the lake,
Blue, my lake!

Fantastic fingers shall come coaxing buds again,
Multifarious fingers, peeling unfolding buds again,
And the rhythms of rousing from clumber,
Shall tremor-shake the fields of bracken umber,
The slate-grey, reed-stiff, wild-duck fens
That foot my hills.

The perfume of violets shall smother the stars,
And the slow-stealing spring-night grass
Shall cover the winter-cruel scars;
Into the soil the bloodroot shall ooze
Its secret cinnabars,
And the roads that wind at the hem of the hills,
Shall climb like slow worms to the trembling stars.

Adamantine air,
Melody-melted,
Music-pelted—
Everywhere,
Love-seeking,
Love-pleading,
Love-yielding,
Everywhere,
And the arms of love are bare!

Lord, I know that spring shall blow up daffodils,—
I shall elude the thin edge of hate,
Take a small pack of dreams to my unsullied hills
And lean my heart upon a midnight shadow,
And rest my head upon a sunbeam in a meadow.

Joan Finnigan

AUTUMN SCENE

In autumn the stage is set
More extravagantly than
At any other season.
Birches, their accented trunks,
Against the green pine curtain,
Toss down golden coins.
Exultant in red, the maples
Stand in the yellow spotlight
Of the slanting sun.
Gray-edged clouds
Are crayon sketched on theatrical blue.

M. L. Finley

SUCCESS

How shall we weigh it? Foiled by mundane schemes,
  May not the mind return upon itself
To gain, through its own liberated dreams.
  Riches beyond all measurable pelf?

Gilbert Thomas

MARAE

(Rurutu, Austral Islands)

Now out of bleakness, distance, and faded longing
I set down my image of you, Marae.

I remember that gold was the predominant of your body,
the aura that always attended you.

Gold was the morning and evening descent of your hair,
the blaze of your breast and thigh, the never-failing imprint
of your sun-warm feet.

Gold, too, your savage laughter. Gold your eyes. Gold even
your childlike rage, and your lost pity for me.

But never once was I surfeited, Marae, though I turned to
stone at the downpour of that gold on my hands, and the profligate
waste of it in my loins.

Gustave Davidson

POEM

A feeling of nightfall having been alone all day
May come by even five p.m. I put on scarves, gay gloves, leave
    them—
Papers, tomatoes, Morley Callaghan, the pictures (little clay
Chicken, Flower Vendor, the static redlegged horse)
Blessing what holds them in their course while I'm away.

Once in the tipsy shrug of a street I could cry aloud
Of something that tugs and bunts me against people and store-
    fronts—
O to mash into piles of oranges, piles of pink Telys, into the crowd,
Combatting colour with a deep but china cheep, a Buy Come Buy,
    a redlegged neigh—
To leap with such inaudible clamour is always glamourous and
    proud.

Colleen Thibaudeau

CHIMES

Beautiful evening with the two kinds of chimes.
The silver slivers of ice that had caught at my milkbottle dropped
Through my hands. On that roof in the sunny lee of big buildings
I looked across at the clear mosque—or onion—top
Of the crazy old Hotel, thinking of those bells;
Wondering why I should always hear at quiet times
The deepreed bong of the Town Clock banging the hour
Mixed with the sweet chatter from the Church Tower?
And why I am always ice-cold and caught-at by the two kinds of chimes?

Colleen Thibaudeau

PROTEST

This, which ladies wear like pretty dresses,
Pick for themselves like a summer flower
(Rows of docile faces at afternoon meetings, and lecturers doling out culture like spoonfuls of honey, while the tea committee keeps one eye on the clock and the little fancy napkins)

This is a pitiable machine-made copy of the real thing
Which is bread to the hungry, and water to drink down in great mouthfuls
Or wash in after a sweaty day's work,
And the voice of a friend after long and terrible silence
And the earth's slow turning, and the running of rivers to the ocean.
The verse, and painting, and music of the club-meeting women is no more creation
Than a smooth plastic cup turned out by the gross in Birmingham or Pittsburgh is the Holy Grail
And I for one will not be bumped to my knees before it even if I must go through life blaspheming, not being pure of heart enough for revelation.

Nacella Young

LOST BAY

Lost are the waters that wait for the sound of the morning,
Still, oh, still are the shores where the shadows creep,
Where the scroll of the fiddle's-head fern and the baneberry glistens,
And the sedge birds sing their way from sleep.

Over the quiet shallows the cardinals flicker,
Gypsy lanterns that flash and flame in the sedge;
Only the loon would dare to challenge an echo,
Where the fawn drinks, lipping the water's edge.

Is it only the bay that is lost in the maze of the woodland?
Is the dim, lost land of Atlantis under the gleam?
O light that blades from the east with the sword of your glory,
Break the dark hours, but leave the heart its dream.

Kathleen Earle

BETROTHAL

Your presence is a balm,
Like a mauve shade over a yellow flame.

Your presence is security,
Like a point of light in a black abyss.

Your presence—it is luxury,
Like a Persian cat on a blue velvet cushion.

Your presence—
Your presence is a terror to me—
Like a hand on my throat!
Ah—
Escape!

Dorothy May Fraser

VAN GOGH

Your passion carried fire throughout the world.
Yellow flowers facing the sun
Flamed, darkling groves of cypress
Flamed, and people walking
Under the burning sun they too
Became tongues of flame, calling on high.
But a solitary tree in early spring, withered
And small, a prison yard,
Potato peelers
Crouched in their drab room
Are held in ice for ever.
Between you painted a flying bridge,
Painted a slender boat. Was your hope
To carry the unhappy over?

Feng Chi

STORM

Listening to the wild wind and crashing rain
We are lonely under the lamplight.
In our small thatched room
Even the furniture
Seems thousands of li away,
The copper censer speeding toward a
    mine in deep mountains,
Earthen pots to clay on a river bank
Like birds through storm flying
Each his own way. We tightly embrace
As if no longer masters of our bodies,
The wild wind blows all things to the sky
Fierce rain beats them down to the mud.
Only this feeble lamplight remains
To prove life's transience.

Feng Chi

WHISTLE UP THE LITTLE COLTS

Out on the range I see the little colts
Miraged in heat . . .
I whistle,
And we wait, steeped in this arid aromatic place
Where crickets jingle in the sage . . .
The children play apart,
And laughing, run like barley in a wind, all freckled gold . . .
They peer beneath their hands against the glare . . .
Grow still and tense.

The colts come titupping,
Breasting the slope, prick-eared,
Lope, plushy-tailed,
Come lightly up the grass, soft-nostrilled, curious,
To shy at us being statues in the trees . . .
Swerve . . .
Separate . . .
And gallop squealing past,—
Oh, they are lovely, and so very young! And I am envious . . .

And now begins the dancing of the colts
With us as Counterpoise, the children Mime,
Decor the pine boles which they prance between in mad farrago,
Vanishing in green and splintered shade to ripple out like velvets
In the sun . . .
Prance, rock, and run,—drumming their little thunder
For the bronzed clouds to answer back . . .
Halt! White-eyed, quivering!
Veer from the coaxing palm,
Wheel to depart,—
And with one impluse start to bend again the gilded upland grass
In wild exuberance of legs, of tails, of heads,
Race-rocketting, snort-galloping
Back to the calm brown shelter of the mares . . .

Flow with the sursurrating grass . . .
Slow to a last cadenza . . .
Dwindle . . .
Pass to became a mirage in the heat.

Girsha Gowing

"WHAT MATTER WHAT WAY?"

Micheal Redmond they say
drowned himself in the bay,
Dublin Bay they do say;—
eels and bones in a bay.

Why should I be concerned?
something was learned,
learned in a way;—
what matter what way?

Poor man he is dead,
politics it is said
or a lover unwed;—
they say as they may.

It was proberly May,
December or May,
December is cold,
it could happen that way.

The story is old,
God rest his soul!
what matter today
eels and bones in a bay.

Lilian Found

DANCE HALL

Thrum thrum-a-thrum thrum
zoom!
Come, all you drums of the world;
snakeskin drums of sacrifice
drowning chants of priests
knifing out hearts of living men on red stone altars of old Mexico.
Drums of cliff-dwellers. muffled to shuffling steps of the Zuni
beating out syncopated rhythms on the hard trampled earth.

ZOOM !
These are the gold-dusted dancers Raleigh saw,
drunk on the thin brown sour Guiana wine,
reclining through days and days of long debauchery.

ZOOM ! and these
the great bass drums of Africa
with negroes dripping sweat in jungle depths where leopard-men
waited to spring.

Tom-tom, tom-tom, a-tom-tom . . .
War drums
by Long Houses on Pacific shores
calling tattooed men to launch great war canoes
with eyes of nacre staring out of carven faces on the prows
fiercely across the sea.
Laughter cracks
on a drunken note. That will be
giant chiefs round the cassava bowl
stretching brown glistening hands towards the gourds.
Drums fire lagging hearts—
pump the lifeblood quicker through warm, quivering veins.
Drums raise men up and drive them forth to dance
age-old measures that were forgotten else.

Drums quicken sex and blood-lust till unsteady feet
trampling down sand under a shield-shaped moon
set nodding weary palms that long for sleep.

So come, rising crescendo, grim tattoo of drums.
Reach across the world, reach out, embrace
this garish place
from which the windows stare as from a painted face.
Thrill bored and shallow mind into brief trance,
feigned Hollywood romance,
pursuit, conquest synthetic
Here, where pathetic,
stifled, streaming,
herd the palefaces at their indoor dance!

E. M. England

KIRSOVA

(Written after a ballet performance in Melbourne during the New Guinea Campaign.)

Kirsova danced—
and I dreamed how the fall of a leaf on a river woke a gum
and tossed a hovering hawk, when a flame
of crimson turned to a lory and flew from a silver wattle;
and the grace of her was music, rainbow music crying
for a boy, in a lost freedom, who watched the golden gorse
running with delicate steps down to the windy sea.

Kirsova danced—
and soon young lads who watched her will bleed away her beauty
in the jungle shadows, in the sea;
then will their white cry against the pain and dark
calling for the lost light be a call for Kirsova.
Her they will reach for in reaching for the loving hands of the earth.
And the waves unloosing their fingers will be unloosing . . .Kirsova.

Flexmore Hudson

FOG

(At Saint John, New Brunswick)

Off-shore,
buoy lights turned to grey moths
snarled in a spider's web.
Alone, the fog-horn, crude guardian-angel,
warned hoarsely of the fanged reef-dweller
and the shoal-woman of bad repute.

The great spumey fleece,
sheared from the Atlantic,
drifted in, screening the embattled Falls,
and blotting out the spar-lined waterfront.
Spiralling up the cobbled streets,
it seeped, like a gossip's tale,
through every door and window.

Ivied stone and tarpaper
huddled under the same shroud;
Along unpaved roads, it built a crumbling wall
beneath jacked-up cottages.

In the Park, it put to flight the feeding pigeons,
who complained as they went
of a certain public nuisance.

Monuments became wraiths in swirling garments.
Sir John A., preoccupied on his pedestal,
was unaware of the damp embrace.
He was listening to the music
of the blind violinist who sat outside
the open market.

The blind violinist, wearing a dinner jacket
that looked down in surprise
at faded denim slacks and battered shoes,
was playing his heart out in a Schubert symphony.

The mist's cool fingers brushed his hollow eyelids;
but he, too, was unaware . . .

A dropped coin clinked in his tin cup;
humiliation sweated his gaunt body.
Confused and trembling, he put away his violin . . .

Fog-bound, the sea-port stood still;
only the racing tides of Fundy
shouldered home.

Kathryn Munro

BUSH SILENCE

This quietude that rushes up and over me
at noon—
opaque gold silence that wanders on interminably
over green flats, over hills that burn
like a kingfisher's breast under the last long shafts of light at
evening;
that creeps up under the stars
all through the night, when the haggard moon
lets down her silver hair, and wraps the hills
in frosty light,
is heavy with unease.

Only one voice breaks through—that of the wind
humming, drumming on my window pane;
humming, thrumming, again, again, again.

The same old theme . . .
Sometimes I dream
of figures, faces, song,
warmly, brightly, they waver by me. Then
silence bears down on me suddenly—wafts them afar,
and grips my soul again.

E. M. England

STEAM THRESHING OUTFIT

A black faced god manages a monster
Whose diet
Is continual racks of straw,
Fed by a tireless robot with a dusty face.
Democrats,
Buggies,
Dust-shuffling children,
All withdraw to a safe distance
While the black face gives a white grin
To his ditch sheltered devotees.

Look up, little people in the ditch
The wheels are high
As Goliath—
Look up beyond the rim of the wheel,
Up where the engineer drives
The slow steamer.
After it the long procession comes—
The separator
With its long intriguing trunk
(Blower to the unbewitched),
Then teams,
Racks,
Wagons,
And the fascinating cook car
With its ghosts of bygone meals.
Slow crawl along a prairie road
Takes the outfit to new golden fields
And gouges out the monster's marks
Along the way.

Later the engineer becomes a man again
And brings the farmer's girls an offering.
Questioning surprise

Greets the basket of net-blue grapes
Borne in his washed and awkward hands.
Were these the hands
That managed that great panting creature
With Goliath wheels?

Say thank you, little people,
say it in a hushed voice.
Marks of his power
Blacken his temple still.
Say thank you in a hushed voice,
And squeeze the slippery centres
From the holy grapes!

Dorothy Morrison

AIR RAID ALARM

In the comfortable sunshine
We came out of the city,
Like many streams
Merging into one sea.
In our minds
One disquiet,
One fate
On our shoulders,
Over us all
One spirit watching,
Till at dusk
Divergent streets
Called us back
And the sea became streams again.

Feng Chi

FOR N—

You came to me
And your coming
Was the first light
With the waking of birds
Ah morn.
You spoke to me
And your voice
Was a song
In the wilderness;
Beauty was born.

Arthur S. Bourinot

UNDISCOVERED

Swiftly we flew, lords of the elements
Moving like gods above the splendid waste
Of wide northland quilted with pine and fir
Dark against reaches of snow. How we raced!

Fleeter than speeding unsubstantial thought,
Casting no shadow from our ether height,
Ever into the greedy dark we sped,
Always onward; into eternal night.

Who can describe the sudden downward flash,
The terrible impaling in the earth
Of that proud shaft built to split the air
And path new skyways in the heaven's girth!

Now what a Van Gogh canvas, colourful
With ragged strokes of brilliant pigment spread
In huge disdain of fair design, is this
That we present—we who are of the dead . . .

How quiet is the northland where we walk
But leave no footprints on the snow: now all
Is still: the stars are tapers, and the wind
Designs pale crystal wreathes to be our pall.

Bluebell Stewart Phillips

HANDS

I watch your hands:
How they caress a glass,
Clasp each other—hold a book,
Rest on a table—push things away!
I watch. And I feel inside me,
Emotion stir and rise . . . then slowly ebb:
For I am each and all those things
Helpless. Held in Passion's web.
And I know your hands; possessive,
Cruelly shapen things of charm,
Are artful agents of a mind
Controlled; unmoved—unwarm.

Ruth Kelly

AS BROWN BIRDS

Desolate trees, bereft of color,
On the ground the leaves
Whisper and stir—then suddenly
As a blur of brown birds winging,
Like yesterdays, are gone.

Tomorrow is unknown,
Today alone is sure
And today, the hour is late:
The wind that took the leaves
Is swinging autumn's gate.

Marion Kathleen Henry

NINE IN FLIGHT

Nine birds sped down into the orchard,
From the high meadow of the summer skies,
A fallen host in mystical formation—
A golden phantom flashed before my eyes.

Only a further vision could have snared them,
Held the veering current of their flight,
Felicity of brush or chiselled marble,
Netted form from rhythmic air and light.

Nine fugitives among the crooked branches,
A holy radiance in their gilded wings,
Nine seraphims had fled the sacred arches—
And Orpheus laughed, and plucked his shining strings.

Lettie Ann Hill

Book Reviews

SPIRIT OF ISRAEL—Hyman Edelstein—Ryerson Press—67 pp. $3.00.

LEAVES OF AMBER WINE—Edna Janes Kayser—Chapman & Grimes—51 pp. $2.75.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE GALA—Nicholas Moore—Editions Poetry London—79 pp. 7s. 6d. (About two dollars.)

THEORY OF SILENCE—William Pillin—Privately Printed. $1.00.

It is impossible to be neutral about "Spirit of Israel", as it is impossible to dismiss it with the term "good" or "bad". The title poem is a saga of the Jew in many lands, in varied verse forms; a pot-pourri of the tribulations of a race. It is difficult to judge the title poem on its merits as poetry, but that is how others will judge it in the final analysis. Does it give pleasure, does it open a facet of human existence hitherto closed, does it deal with human experience? One section sounds like a college cheerleader whooping it up at a football game: "HEP! HEP! HEP! . . . And Israel heard . . . While the cross of fire and steel . . . Its fell path seared." The HEP! business was the cry of the Crusaders in Jerusalem.

Solemnity is the keynote of this poem and sadness of the spirit. The defensive reflex of a race that has been pitied, reviled and persecuted, but has yet found opportunity to create some of the best poetry ever written and produced some of the greatest men of any race.

Mr. Edelstein has had a narrow and winding path to follow in "Spirit of Israel". Religious poetry sometimes degenerates into mawkish sentiment but he has avoided that pitfall. The poem is personal and yet expressive of the Jewish race. It is narrative and it is lyric, and despite the apparently disconnected parts, the same thread binds the whole.

I like the poem "Provisioned".

"Ah, fair Felicia, you were so winning,
When a bold free Venus, you went on sinning
In your own Bohemian fashion:—
But now to a fat, rich grocer you're wed
Who doles you bacon and your daily bread
With a grocer's ardent passion."

The "Other Poems" are amazingly diversified in subject and form. "Exiles" is tender with the tenderness of a race of exiles "In a blue valley of stars among the Alps".

Technically these poems are polished as if they had been rubbed together for a long time; like coloured stones on a sea shore. They do not belong to any school of writers, medieval or modern. On occasion, the author uses "thee" and "thou" so naturally these archaic terms are scarcely noticed. The poem, "Not These—", is worth quoting in full. There is no word of its lines that is not "just right".

"Not the nails of dull iron through numb hands and feet,
Not the vain crown of thorns upon scatheless brow,
Not the spear of steel in His side—
That wasn't how He died . . .
Not the cross of wood 'mid thieves beside—
Not these were how He was crucified . . .
But the transverse bar of frowning brows;
The thorns of eyelashes piously aloof; the lance
Of eyes respectably askance;
The nails of clenched teeth, civilly-taut
Lips that ventured not
To shout Hosannahs or spit;
The cruciform silence, shut doors, shut mouth, shut minds. . . ."

Many other poets have written about the crucifixion—notably Ezra Pound, but none have done better than this.

The pages of "Leaves of Amber Wine" fall into a familiar pattern with conventional verse forms and bright embroidery of words. The metre continues to the end pretty much the same, which makes it a little monotonous before that end has been reached.

The author has been published in most of those little poetry magazines south of the border which act as a proving ground for the neophyte. These poems are in no sense amateurish or sloppy, however; in their own way they are good—within obvious limitations. The old bogey of triteness and lack of originality appears. Simple emotions are very praiseworthy but life generally turns out to be more complex. That could be a definition for modern verse: complexity that is simplified. No doubt some people will like this book because it contains the old adjectives, the old similes and emotions; like a costume ball with zealous chaperones all over the floor.

Nicholas Moore is a poet to refute all other poetry. He is young and he is vital, and he explores every alleyway where a man may go. He turns himself inside out for the edification of others; he jumps through hoops and falls in love with scientific detachment, his eyes on the eventual printed words beyond. Most of his verse has a light sardonic touch but its implications are not light or trivial. He is the surgeon's scalpel, a searchlight aimed at the clouds and radar waves bouncing back from the moon to describe its topography.

I have found it to be a quality of good modern verse that even after it is read and understood, some part of it eludes the mind, leaves room for speculation on what the writer means. This quality is characteristic of Moore in his overtones and undertones, the part he leaves unsaid. His verse is intensely personal, and because of that, equally universal. It deals with people, it laughs at them, derides them, laughs with them, but never scolds them. The poems are integrated and well-knit, and it is difficult to choose a single excerpt that might be thought to represent the whole. Here is one that can stand by itself.

> "Passing so easily from love to love,
> The modern Casanova thinks he's a Galahad,
> And all his loves indefinitely noble,
> But you've been had, dearie, you've been had."

Love is always faintly ridiculous and illusory, so earnest and so short. Life is the same way but it is not a matter for lamentation.

According to the biographical note on the dust jacket, Moore has been a prolific writer for the last fifteen years. On reading his verse the reason is understandable. There is nothing in the world that is not material for his pen, grist for his mill; and he invests them all with importance and ribald dignity. His casual meetings are little classics, his little men are touching and laughable and his contrasts are unexpected loveliness. "Anecdote at the Purple Moccasin" deserves a wide audience.

> " 'Ingenious as it may seem, the Emperor Caligula
> Was in the habit of sharing his bath with a tiger.
> Its huge muscles gleamed; and the black stripes on the orange
> Fur brought him lascivious delights. Its vigour
> Reminded him of his manliness and of
> The manliness of all emperors.' I smiled.
> Anecdotes flew from Mr. Tabenny's mouth, but
> Could they be true? His surmises were all wild;
> The strangest creatures populated his fancies.
> 'And when the bath was over, the Emperor would laugh,
> And his wife, who loved to hear him laughing, would come in,
> Beautiful as a re-touched photograph,

Her bronze hair strung in waves upon her shoulders.
And she would kiss him naked as he was.'
'And what about the tiger in the bath?'
I asked. 'He sat and watched them. In his paws
He trapped the soap, then chased it like a fish
Around the slippery walls. He would seem to grin
At Caligula and his mistress, happy
In the warm water, impervious to the din
Of her kisses and faithful sounds . . . ' "

In this book of poems Nicholas Moore is sharing his bath with the world.

I confess I had some trouble while reading "Theory of Silence". The cover is rather distracting and I haven't yet figured out what the design represents. The paper is first class and the printing is without equal. All in all, the format is the best I've seen for a volume without a hard cover. But the poetry, yes, the poetry . . . It needs clarification, or failing that, I need an operation to have my prejudices amputated.

Here and there a verse will break up through the surface like a swimmer gasping for air. In one of them I found genuine merit—which is not to say the others have no merit, but I can't find it.

"Form was a classic mirror
In any age that breathed deep,
A lense that seized the error
And made the climbing steep."

Pax Vobiscum!

Alfred W. Purdy

SONGS OF THE SOUTH SEAS—William Swaan, Litt.D.—2574 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.—52 pp.

If one anticipates from the title and cover photographs some lilting melody of Hawaii after the style of Don Blanding or other visitors to Oceana he will be disappointed. Although a missionary to the Fiji Isles the author has given no inkling of their enchantment beyond the stereotype of gospel verse that might apply anywhere.

There is an interesting arrangement of subject matter related to the scripture text on each left-hand page and amplified by a "chorus" on the right-hand page. If this were set to music the book might be enhanced in song.

THE STATES—Frederic Jarrett—leatherette 104 pp. $1.70—Hart Severance Editions, Shawbridge, P.Q.

"A poetic drama on statesmanship and war" is the author's subtitle concerning the affairs in the State of Hellene. "Hellene" is symbolic of a free people, says a note; no other allusions are intended in the play. Also, brackets indicate unspoken thought. This is a sincere and ambitious attempt to focus attention upon the struggle for freedom of some mountain state beset by power plotters within and unscrupulous aggressors without. Eventually and true to pattern they find a *casus belli*. The ultimate

victory of right, celebrated with chorales and choruses of Hellenic youth fraternizing with the Ostians, the ancient enemy of Hellene, is subject matter for good drama.

It is difficult to picture this play on the stage. Perhaps it is not intended to be acted, but "the unspoken thoughts" really give the clues to the psychological reactions of the leading characters. Then there is the metrical rhythm which is alien to accepted English. It is neither free verse nor the customary blank verse of our dramatists. It is not prose yet often prosy. The writer has a curious habit of accenting the participle:

> "On myriad multitudinous roads
> You have travelled . . .
> So too, Hellene, on new arisen wings
> is transformed and altered."

Whatever the cause, the reader finds his interest hamstrung by mutilated English. May we hope that this will be corrected in the next edition? Poetic drama has a place and this attractive volume should find one.

PALISADES OF FEAR—Ronald Bottral (1949)—70 pp. Cloth boards with decorated jacket—Impressionistic line drawings throughout by Franczeka Themerson—Editions Poetry London Ltd., 55 Victoria St. S.W. 1. 6s.

This accomplished poet, known on both sides of the Atlantic to readers of selective quality magazines adds a sixth volume to his credit. The title poem climaxes a series of brilliant explorations into the failure of man to realize his ideal. With unrestrained realism—perhaps overdone at times—he reveals in striking satire the inconsistencies of homo sapiens. The gorgon of science (and commerce) has undermined his faith in God. His clever thinking has not enlightened his learning.

> "Fear of the light, burned fingers,
> Have driven inward our darkness,
> Built obscuring lenses over the awakened eye."

Like Prometheus man has "miscounted the odds". Even dreams are fraught with fear.

> "Dreamt by girls climbing the stairs of shops
> Dreams are interpreted by old men
> Peering into ledgers, peeping
> Round the corners of the world."

Various aspects of this fear complex are considered as Masks that mock the God-begotten. He abhors Hiroshima which has not answered the injunction of the gospel. He calls upon the Creator to "Challenge Our Hate". "Peace will come when there is no more murder in the womb."

There is a moving parallel of thought between the poet's "Dead Ends" and T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland". His image of decadence more forthright and lucid, Bottrall leaves the reader satisfied, if somewhat startled by the truth of his metaphors.

J. R. G. Adams

The Canadian Authors Association

Aims, Activities and Achievements

As the Canadian Poetry Magazine was founded by and is owned and published by the Canadian Authors Association, subscribers may be interested in learning the basic facts about the organization.

Growth of the Canadian Literary Movement and the consequent increase in the status of authorship are reflected in the activities of the Canadian Authors Association, incorporated under Dominion charter, as the representative organization of letters in Canada. From its inception thirty years ago, the Association has played a vital part in the striking development in stature of Canadian literature during the past three decades. This Association, founded by Stephen Leacock, B. K. Sandwell, John Murray Gibbon and Pelham Edgar in 1921 for the specific purpose of protecting authors' rights under copyright legislation, has since then greatly enlarged its functions and activities in both the artistic and practical concerns of authorship. The Association is affiliated with La Societé des Ecrivains Canadiens, The Canadian Arts Council and The Composers Authors and Publishers Association of Canada.

The aims of the Association are two-fold:

(a) It fosters the morale of writers through association with one another in its branches and at its annual convention and through its publications. Some of its activities, such as the Governor-General's Awards, have stimulated both the quality and quantity of literary works of all kinds written by Canadians.

(b) The practical functions of the Association are many and varied. It assists its members in such matters as advice about relations with editors and publishers and will, in proper case, intervene on behalf of the member to enforce his rights concerning his literary property. Special committees exist to deal with various professional problems of members, such as copyright, income tax, market list and contracts.

Besides giving aid to individual members, the Association in its corporate capacity represents the interests of authorship generally. This Association often complies with the requests of our own and foreign governments for advice and aid.

1. COPYRIGHT

This organization, founded for the specific purpose of protecting authors' public rights, is devoted to conserving and improving their situation with respect to copyright. Copyright is the material basis of the writing profession because it is the legal means of establishing property; furthermore it protects the ideas of authors from being tampered with. In order to inform the writer as to his position, we have published and distributed to all members a short pamphlet written by our Counsel, Dr. Harold G. Fox, K.C., international authority on Copyright. A copy of the pamphlet is available to new members on application to this office.

2. INCOME TAX

This Association has obtained from the Government the right for an author to spread royalty income over a period up to

three years during which a book was being written. It has also established the principle that legitimate expenses of a writer in practising his craft may be deducted from writing income during the same period. The Association has also obtained a ruling that book royalties are earned income and not subject to supertax.

3. CONTRACTS

A committee of this organization has drafted a standard book contract for the guidance of its members when dealing with publishers. This standard contract has resulted in improved terms in the contracts offered by most Canadian publishers, some of whom have virtually adopted the contract *in toto*. A standing committee of experienced authors will, on request, give advice to any member concerning contractual matters under negotiation. Members are urged to seek this committee's advice by submitting the draft of any proposed contract before signing it.

4. GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S AWARDS

The Association, with the approval of the late Lord Tweedsmuir, established the Governor-General's Annual Literary Awards. The object of these awards is to reward authors of books of special merit and to direct the attention of the reading public each year to a small group of meritorious works, in order to strengthen Canadian literature by bringing the reading public and the writers together. Medals are presented annually by the Governor-General or his deputy to the authors of books judged to be the best of the year in Fiction, Poetry, Creative Non-Fiction, Academic Non-Fiction, and Juveniles. The Governor-General's Awards Board appointed by this Association also administers the judging for the Leacock Medal for Humor.

5. CONVENTION

The Annual Meetings of the Association are held at widely separated geographic points and afford opportunity for discussion of our policy and of the problems of writers. On these occasions addresses are delivered by distinguished authors and craft discussions are held in round table and panel form. The Annual Meetings foster a national outlook towards literature in Canada and offer members the benefits of extending their personal acquaintance with other Canadian writers.

6. CANADIAN BOOK WEEK

In response to public demand we have continued the annual celebration of Canadian Book Week, begun in 1922 for the purpose of acquainting the Canadian public with its writers and their works. At most of the larger centres of population, during the first week of November, authors address service and other clubs, broadcast appropriate information, and encourage libraries and bookstores to organize appropriate displays of Canadian books. Newspapers devote considerable space to events held during the week.

7. PUBLICATIONS

(a) The Canadian Author and Bookman—a quarterly, is the official organ of the Association. It presents articles on the problems and techniques of writing and gives information about the activities of authors and their publications.

(b) The Canadian Poetry Magazine—a quarterly, furnishes a medium for the publication of verse of quality, for which contributors receive nominal remuneration.

(c) First Serial Rights—a quarterly, is an informal bulletin for members only, to increase the frequency of communication with them.

(d) Votes and Proceedings—is the report the Annual Meeting.

(e) Market List—prepared annually and nt on request to members in good standing.

GENERAL SERVICES

Of various sorts such as obtaining return manuscripts from editors and publishers ıd obtaining payments in arrears. The ssociation has projects of various kinds ıder way for the benefit of writers. The ssociation cannot undertake to criticize or arket any literary material.

ı. BOOK SERVICE

The Association will supply any book pub-hed or distributed by any Canadian pub-her post free on receipt of the retail price.

RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

The Association represents to the Govern-ent the interests of authors in various ways cluding the presentation of briefs to ap-ropriate Royal Commissions.

Advice is frequently tendered on request the Department of External Affairs, pecially in connection with UNESCO. he Information Division of the Depart-ent of External Affairs frequently requests ıd receives information about Canadian erature for dissemination to foreign govern-ents through the Canadian embassies road.

). BRANCH ACTIVITIES

The Branches of the Association, autono-ous in their structure and activities, afford embers the opportunity to meet at regular tervals for mutual stimulation and for rticipation in craft discussions. The anches further supply the organization by ich distinguished writers may be met and heard. The co-operative spirit of the branch fosters the professional sense of the writer.

11. IDEALS AND ETHICS

The Canadian Authors Association is a vital force for the preservation and growth of literature in Canada. Its functions are three-fold—morale, ethics and standards. It fosters the morale of writers by providing a means of professional association, it stands for the highest forms of professional ethics in the writing profession, and it provides incentives and mutual stimulation for raising the standards of writing as a contribution to the cultural life of Canada.

This Association is not afraid of idealism. Indeed, its very existence and the adequate performance of its functions depend on the devotion of its members to its ideals as well as to its interests.

12. NATIONAL CULTURE

Just as Canada has been created as a national unit politically and industrially by the conscious desire of its people, and to a certain extent in defiance of the paths of geographical and other forces, so too the writers of Canada have consciously determined to play their creative part in the formation of a national culture. Consequently the few writers practising their art thirty years ago have boldly faced many natural handicaps of their situation and through this Association have increasingly found means to exist and to grow in an environment originally unfavourable until it has now become possible for the person of literary abilities to lead in Canada the life of a professional writer. The substantial literature already created is pushing out to represent us in other countries and is gaining in influence as a cohesive national force.

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